

With reference to paragraph 7 of the office action, claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form as claim 18. Claim 14 has been rewritten in independent form as claim 19. Thus, the claims should be allowable.

The references the examiner cited in connection with the dependent claims, some of which are still-pending as amended claims 2-5, 11-12, and 15, have been noted.

Applicant generally does not contest examiner's analysis of the references and bases for rejection but for the following: that a tapered stake is obvious for ramp-racks. Applicant provides the argument for record purposes and in support of allowability of claim 14. The cited dictionary definition applies to stakes which are driven into the ground. (Merriam Webster Collegiate 11th Ed. completes the examiner's cited definition, namely "a pointed piece of wood or other material driven into the ground as a marker or support.") Further, the examiner on the one hand says it would be obvious but on the other hand says that Donohue presumably does not have it because of difficult removal -- which seems to recognize non-obviousness. Given the number of references and the absence of a disclosure or suggestion of taper suggests it is not a design choice.

Notwithstanding the thoroughness of the rejection with respect to the dependent claims, applicants request allowance of the now-amended dependent claims, as preferred embodiments of the patentable invention of the parent claim, from which they obtain novelty. Similarly, applicants request allowance of new claim 20 which has grouped several of the other-claim limitations for simplicity.

Further consideration and allowance of the amended claims is requested.

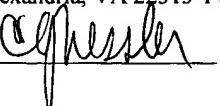
Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on September 30, 2004.


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